

In 1999, Wesley graduated from Greeley West High School and soon after attended Aims Community College as well as the University of Northern Colorado. After the tragedy of September 11, 2001 Wesley signed up for the University of Northern Colorado Reserve Officer Training Corp.

Wesley joined the Army and was sent over to Iraq in October of 2003. While in Iraq, he served as a 21 Bravo Combat Engineer. His mission was to clear an area for vehicles and troops by using high explosives.

While Wesley was in Balad, which is about 30 miles north of Baghdad, a bomb exploded and a suicide bomber rammed into his HMMWV vehicle, knocking Wesley off of the gun position on top. He was taken to the hospital for treatment of torn muscles and ligaments in his neck and shoulder.

Since then, Wesley has spent the past several months at Fort Carson with his wife, Jennifer, who is pregnant with their first child. He is currently working as a recruiter, but wants to make the Army his career so he plans on re-enlisting.

Wesley comes from a military family. His grandfather served in World War II and his uncle died while serving in Vietnam.

I am proud to honor Wesley for his courage and sacrifice on behalf of all Americans. Wesley's courage has helped to protect our democracy and keep our homeland safe. I urge all of my fellow colleagues to applaud Wesley for his service to our great Nation.

#### MISSION FIRST, PEOPLE ALWAYS

#### HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 2004

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the brave men and women in our armed forces who are serving courageously in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world. Our Nation owes these brave troops a debt of gratitude for the sacrifices they have endured to make this world a safer place.

I particularly want to salute our reservists, who have transformed from a supporting role to become a critical part of the backbone of our military. More than 40% of our troops now deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan draw from the Reserve Component. Many of them have served multiple tours, been called up with less than five days' notice, and had their deployments extended well beyond the promised "12 months boots on the ground."

Now the Defense Department has announced that it will activate 5,600 members of the Individual Ready Reserve, a pool of former soldiers that have completed their active or reserve duty but still have time left on their contracts. And the next troop rotation for Iraq and Afghanistan will only increase the burden on the Reserve Component, who will soon make up 43% of our deployed troops beginning in February of 2005.

Tonight, I would like to highlight the harrowing story of the 94th Military Police Company, the longest activated reserve unit to date. Roughly one-third of the 94th's members live in Massachusetts, and I have had the opportunity to speak with many of their family members in recent months.

The 94th Military Police Company first deployed to Iraq in April of 2003 after fulfilling a

mission in Bosnia. The unit has seen its deployment extended twice—first by six months, then by four more. On Easter weekend of this year, members of the 94th loaded onto a bus in Kuwait to finally come home. Just as they were about to depart, they were turned back by their commanders and told they would have to serve another 120 days because there simply wasn't enough trained MPs to replace them. Now, just a few weeks before they are expected to return home for good, they have been sent out on another convoy mission.

While we are indebted to their service, the story of the 94th MP Company shows that this country can't continue to place the burden of war squarely on the back of our Reserve Component. If we ask these men and women to put themselves in harm's way in Iraq for extended periods of time, we must ensure that they are given the same fair treatment as their active duty counterparts. If we do not, we will face a serious recruitment and retention crisis.

What we need is a committed strategy to restructure our weary and overstretched Army.

First and foremost, we must expand the active duty endstrength of our military. I applaud my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee on both sides of the aisle for recognizing this need. We have authorized an increase of 30,000 soldiers and 9,000 marines over three years as part of this year's defense authorization bill. I am disappointed that the Pentagon has chosen to overstretch our current forces instead of expanding our pool of manpower.

Second, I am concerned that the occupational specialties most in demand—such as military police, intelligence analysts and engineers—are highly concentrated in the Reserve Component. Instead of calling up the Individual Ready Reserve, we need to ensure that we have an adequate pool of specialists within the active-duty force. This requires an aggressive recruitment and training program backed by incentives to attract people with the right skills.

Third, we need to lay out a transparent, equitable rotation schedule for our reservists that allows members and their families to predict when they will be activated. This administration has treated Guard and Reserve families with arrogance and a lack of respect. They have notified members of the Army Reserves and National Guard just days before deploying them to Iraq, broken promises that they would only serve for twelve months boots on the ground, and issued sweeping stop-loss orders to prevent members from retiring when they have fulfilled their service.

The Administration's policies aren't pro-family or pro-military. Our troops and their families deserve better. If we don't treat our Reserve Component with the respect they deserve, our military's readiness will suffer. That has consequences for all of us.

As our troops say, "Mission first, people always." Our reservists are fighting on the front lines of the battlefield to protect our security, freedom, and democracy. We need to stand up for them and provide them with the respect they deserve.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MEMBERS AND STAFF OF INDOOR RECREATION OF ORLEANS COUNTY

#### HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 2004

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the accomplishments of a very special group of volunteers who hail from Vermont's Northeast Kingdom—the tri-county area of Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties. I rise to honor the dedicated men and women who have formed and are building Indoor Recreation of Orleans County, more generally known as IROC.

Dr. Robert E. Smith, a resident of Newport, chairs the IROC Board of Directors. Dr. Smith and the IROC Board are supported by a 50-member President's Advisory Council, a group of community leaders whose guidance has been invaluable all along the way.

James G. Davis directs IROC's day-by-day operations for the Board of Directors. Mr. Davis is a native Vermonter whose vision for the organization has been inspirational.

IROC's three-fold mission addresses key regional issues: To improve the quality of life and develop healthy lifestyles for Northeast Kingdom area residents—especially youth—through educational and recreational activities; to develop community-centered facilities and programs that foster a safe environment and inclusive programs to all participants; and, to deliver its services and programs at the lowest cost possible.

IROC will have five distinct facility emphases: (1) an aquatic center; (2) a multi-purpose recreation arena; (3) a fitness center; (4) a community room, and (5) an educational/technology center. Within each of these areas, multiple activities have been identified for further development.

The Aquatic Center (Main Level) will focus not only on general swimming but also on competitive swimming, rehabilitation, and other types of water activities. North Country Hospital and Health Center, Inc. has committed to using the Aquatic Center on a regular basis for those patients whose rehabilitation program would benefit from hydrotherapy.

The Multi-purpose Recreation Arena (Main Level) has been designed specifically to allow for flexibility in activities. The floor plan for this area includes three regulation-size high school basketball courts that can be converted (almost instantaneously) to accommodate indoor soccer, in-line skating, lacrosse, volleyball, tennis and badminton. The multi-purpose area includes seating for 500 spectators and will serve the anticipated demand for general recreation as well as league and tournament play. A walking track will surround the multi-purpose floor area. The design of the multi-purpose area will allow for specialty shows (home, garden, auto, for example) and concerts.

A 2,100 sq. ft. Fitness Center will offer cardiovascular training and exercise, aerobics instruction, fitness training, muscle toning, and body building activities to interested individuals on a membership basis. North Country Hospital and Health Center, Inc. has also committed to using the Fitness Center on a regular